

Education Cabinet

Kentucky's longest-serving state archivist Richard N. Belding retires after 28 years

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FRANKFORT, Ky. – A national pioneer and leader of preserving electronic records, Kentucky State Archivist and Records Administrator Richard N. Belding will retire Aug. 31 after 28 years of service with the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA). Belding is the longest-serving Kentucky state archivist.

"Kentucky owes a great debt to Richard for his outstanding contributions, as do archives and manuscript repositories around the state," said Wayne Onkst, Kentucky state librarian and KDLA commissioner. "His dedicated service over the past three decades has increased the safety and security of government records, as well as made it easier for citizens to find government information."

Belding, who joined KDLA in 1979 as one of the original field archivists with the Kentucky Guide Project, was the first head of KDLA's Local Records Program. The program, which helps local governments preserve and manage official records, was one of the first of its kind in the nation and has been a model for several states. The program now assists more than 2,900 local government agencies in Kentucky in properly preserving records.

Belding became assistant director of KDLA's Public Records Division in 1981 and was promoted to Kentucky state archivist and records administrator in 1986.

During his tenure as state archivist, Belding has helped develop of a number of programs and services for government records, including the creation of the annual Public Archives Symposium series and the

formation of one of the first state government records programs to gather and preserve public electronic records, such as e-mail, digital images, video and Web sites. He has led a succession of projects and research grants to secure the preservation of digital media. In addition, Belding has worked to secure funding for an archival storage addition adjacent to KDLA's Frankfort building.

"The State Archives is a central element of the state's information infrastructure, and at a time of heightened anxiety about national security issues and concern over the state's vulnerability to natural disaster or other dislocation, it's essential to provide secure, well-designed facilities that protect and assure access to these vital resources," Belding said.

As state archivist, Belding also serves as coordinator of the Kentucky State Historical Advisory Board (SHRAB), providing leadership to archival and manuscript repositories around the state. During his term as coordinator, Kentucky historical records repositories have received almost \$700,000 in grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, with the assistance of the SHRAB.

Belding said that Kentucky is "very well served by a fine community of archivists and manuscript curators who are continually seeking ways to expand access to their collections and improve their facilities."

In 1998-99, Belding chaired the steering committee of Council of State Archivists, the national organization of those heading state public records programs. He was the first co-chair of the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrator's Committee on Electronic Records and Information Systems, helping to start Crossroads, a newsletter about electronic records management. He has been active in several professional organizations throughout his career and was a U.S. delegate to the International Council on Archives at its meetings in Madrid and Montreal.

The Lexington resident plans to remain active in archival and records management activities, to travel, and to spend time with his wife, Sharon, and their two adult children, Drew and Annie.

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The Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives provides equitable access to quality library and information resources and services, as well as helps public agencies ensure that legislatively mandated documentation of government programs is created, efficiently maintained, and made accessible. For more information on KDLA resources, programs and services visit www.kdla.ky.gov or call 502-564-8300, ext. 315.

KDLA is an agency of the Kentucky Education Cabinet which coordinates learning programs from P-16, and manages and supports training and employment functions in the Department for Workforce Investment. For more information on our programs, visit www.educationcabinet.ky.gov, or www.workforce.ky.gov, or call 502-564-6606.

